

In Memoria: Farewell Moira Lipyeat By Cathie Plowman Photographs by Mary Trayes

Moira has left us, and her 94 years of full life ended. I sit here and feel that loss, but while saddened with the news of her passing, I'm filled with smiles for the zest she lived life with. Here's a few memories from times I had the pleasure of sharing with Moira.



Figure 1: Moira with her CCG Life Members Certificate 2009

Travelling to the ACKMA conference in Ulverstone, Tasmania in May 2011, Moira and I sat together on the Sunday afternoon bus from Launceston to Ulverstone.

Moira told me that she wasn't supposed to come to the conference as she had been diagnosed with a brain tumour.

But, she said, I told the doctor 'I've had a good life and I won't have any treatment'. Then she added the personal issues of the Christchurch earthquake in February that year. Moira was still in her nightwear when the earthquake struck. Her

wardrobe being thrown to the floor, with the door facing the floor, meant that she couldn't get to her clothes. Moira was concerned about the neighbours, and she checked on the people next door. Having ascertained they were okay, there was a neighbour across the road who she wanted to check was okay. This meant going across the road, still in her dressing gown. All good with the neighbour, but on her return to her and husband Derek's house a crack opened in the road as she crossed it—so there's Moira, still in her dressing gown and down a wet, muddy hole in the road.

Back at her home, Moira's bathroom was out of action, and still was at the time of the Ulverstone conference in May, so Moira expressed how wonderful it was to come to ACKMA. Firstly, she hadn't died from the brain tumour and secondly with a bucket for a toilet and no shower at home it was going to be a treat to spend a week in a cabin at Ulverstone.

The following ACKMA conference was at Waitomo in May 2013 and this event was being followed a few months later by the International Congress of Speleology (ICS) in Brno, (then) Czech Republic. While at Waitomo, Moira determined that she would go to Brno and made a booking using her credit card.

Figure 2: Moira and others at Ruakuri Cave, Waitomo, ACKMA 2013

However, at the end of the ACKMA conference when Moira tried to use her credit card to book ferry travel back to the South Island, she found that her credit card had been blocked. On phoning her bank she was advised it was blocked 'as someone had made a booking using her card to go to a speleological congress in the Czech Republic' and the bank had determined that a woman of Moira's age would not be doing this, so obviously the card had been mis-used and the bank cancelled the card...



During the Waitomo conference Moira conveyed to me about her husband's accident near Punakaiki in 2012. When Derek didn't return from his solo trip, Moira sat outside the cave all night. At first light Moira, who didn't drive, had a cup of tea and walked eight kilometres along the road to raise the alarm. Moira told me her big concern as she approached a stranger's house was that she was wearing yesterday's clothing. Thankfully, all ended well, and Derek was assisted out of the cave with minor injuries. (Derek passed at age 90 in 2020.)

On to Brno in July 2013 for the ICS and Moira had arranged for a much younger woman (whose name I sadly can't recall) to accompany her as a 'chaperone'. David (Butler) and I were at the conference, and it was a delight to run into Moira and her companion every day enjoying the conference or out and about the historic Brno streets.

The next time I met up with Moira was in 2016 when I was involved in a cave guides workshop that proceeded the ACKMA AGM held at Capricorn Caves. The guides workshop ended with snorkelling trip to Great Keppel Island and, while some had concerns for her senior years, Moira was not going to be stopped enjoying a swim, with kickboard, off the back of the tour boat.

There are many more stories, compiling the volume *Delving Deeper* on caving in New Zealand, work as a teacher and much more. I know that Moira's recent years haven't been easy, but she sure resisted the decline of the years and kept the zing in her life well into her senior age. Thanks for the memories, Moira, and sincere condolences to your family. They have a hard act to follow.



Figure 3: Moira and Ben Deer in Aranui Cave, Waitomo, ACKMA 2013 (left)

Figure 4: At the 'Delving Deeper' book launch, Moa Bone Cave, Redcliffs, 2003, Malcolm Laird and Moira (seated) (below)



Figure 5: Moira on post-conference tour, Oamaru, ACKMA 2005 (left), unknown photographer.

I have to say Moira, I like your style – this was breakfast!!!

